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Notwithstanding the criticism which we have ventured to make on the treatment of *Sheol* in the Revised Version, we desire to say that, as far as we have been able to examine that Version, it is a great improvement on the one in common use. Though more changes, wisely made, would have been welcome to many scholars, it was certainly better to err on the side of caution than on the side of rashness. And in spite of all the just or unjust criticism upon it, the Revision is a work of high and reverent scholarship, contributing every-where to a more correct view of the original text than could be obtained from the Common Version.

ORIGIN OF THE OLD TESTAMENT RELIGION.

BY PROFESSOR F. A. GAST, D. D.,

Theological Seminary of the Reformed Church, Lancaster, Pa.

To the general scholar, as well as to the professional theologian, the religion of the Old Testament, when presented in its true light, cannot fail to prove profoundly interesting. There can be no question that, next to Christianity, with which it stands in organic unity, and of which it was the necessary preparation, it has been the mightiest spiritual power in the history of mankind. Its superior excellence is at once discerned when we compare it with the religions of nature, even in their best and purest forms. Where among them all can be found such exalted ideas of the one living, holy God; such a lofty view of the spiritual dignity of man; such a true insight into the nature of sin and holiness; such a pure morality; such a humane spirit; such sobriety, chasteness and spirituality of worship? These are features that immediately arrest the attention, and set this religion in the most marked contrast to heathenism, which, however attractive it may be in some of its aspects to the poetic mind, is yet marred by a gross polytheism, by a fantastic mythology, by a low and degrading conception of man, and not unfrequently by cruel and licentious rites.

Interesting as the religion of the Old Testament is in itself, it gains additional interest from its historical development. From the start it exhibited a vigorous and healthy life. As we trace it through its long career, we cannot but admire its constant progress upward from lower and cruder to higher and more spiritual forms. It at once entered into a bold conflict with falsehood under its various guises as they came successively to view—with the idolatrous nature-worship of the surrounding heathen nations, and with the unspiritual ideas of the chosen people themselves. A wonderful provi-

dence brought Israel into contact with all the representative nations of the ancient world—the Egyptians, the Phœnicians, the Assyrians, the Babylonians, the Persians, the Greeks and the Romans—with each in its turn and in the time of its highest glory. In this way, the spiritual faith of Israel, confronted with the manifold errors of heathenism, was compelled to struggle for its very existence. In this struggle, however, it gathered a strength and attained a purity otherwise impossible. In each successive crisis it displayed a new power of development, brought into clearer light the contrast between pure and false religion, and proved itself better adapted than any other belief to meet the higher religious needs of man.

Such a religion could not fail to exert a mighty influence on the destinies of mankind. It is the religion that gave us the Ten Commandments. What incalculable power it has put forth through the Decalogue alone! Had it given us nothing else, it would still be worthy of our highest admiration and sincerest gratitude. But it has produced a literature which, as preserved in the Old Testament, possesses an immortal life. Take only the Psalter; and who can estimate its effect, during the twenty-five or more centuries of its history, in awakening, strengthening and consoling whatever is highest and holiest in man? And its power, instead of waning, ever increases. It is felt more widely in the Christian church to-day than it was felt in the Jewish synagogue of old.

The religion of the Old Testament has extended its influence far beyond the limits of the people of Israel. The religion of a single nation, it yet set certain spiritual forces in motion which have touched the deepest life of the race. After the Captivity, when the Jews with their sacred books were scattered over the face of the earth, it made numberless proselytes both in the East and in the West. It furnished the best elements of the religion of Mohammed, which is confessedly more indebted to Judaism than to either heathenism or Christianity. Indeed, it is hardly too much to say, with Emanuel Deutsch, that Islam is “neither more nor less than Judaism as adapted to Arabia—plus the apostleship of Jesus and Mohammed.”¹

Above all, the religion of the Old Testament is the root out of which grew the religion of Christ. A singular feature, distinguishing this religion from all others the world has ever known, is that, all along its history, it looked forward to a time when it should produce something higher and better than itself—that it carried in it a prophecy, not indeed of its death (for it felt the throbbings of an undying

¹ *Literary Remains*, p. 64.

life), but of its regeneration, of its transformation, of its elevation to a higher spiritual plane, where the old, perishable form should disappear, and the living substance should assume a new and more adequate form. And this has actually come to pass. Christianity has infused into the religion of the Old Testament a new creative life, and lifted it up to a higher order of existence, where now, under more favorable conditions, it exerts its full spiritual power, and will continue to exert it till it permeates the entire life of humanity.

Of a religion so lofty in its nature, so remarkable in its development, and so mighty in its influence, we wish to know more. We wish especially to know whence and how it originated. And this is the question we propose now briefly to discuss.

In tracing out its origin, we must go back in history far beyond Moses. It was not he that first introduced this spiritual monotheistic faith into the world. He himself received it as an inheritance of the past. Moses proclaimed no new God, established no new religion. When he presented himself before his oppressed people, it was in the name of the God of Abraham, of Isaac and of Jacob. The foundations on which he built had been laid centuries before. His ancestors, and they alone, had for generations possessed a knowledge of the only true and living God, had expressed faith in His protecting care, and had cherished the consciousness of a peculiar covenant relation which they sustained to Him; and though, during the sojourn in Egypt, this religious faith had lost much of its original power, yet it still slumbered in the heart of Israel, only waiting to be revived and quickened into energy.

And this was done by Moses. He opened a new stage in the development of Old Testament religion. Before him it had been the religion of a holy family; he made it the religion of an entire nation. Among the patriarchs it had been predominantly subjective; through him it became predominantly objective. Moses fixed it in definite, outward forms, gave it a full code of laws, and embodied it in national institutions and expressive symbols; but he did not originate it *de novo*.

If we would find the well-spring of this higher spiritual faith that has blessed the world, we must go back to Abraham, the friend of God. He is acknowledged both by the New Testament and by the Old, as the "father of the faithful." "He is the first distinct, historical witness," says Stanley, "at least for his own race and country, to Theism, to Monotheism, to the unity of the Lord and Ruler of all, against the primeval idolatries, the *natural* religions of the ancient world."¹ At

¹ *History of the Jewish Church*, Vol. II., p. 18.

a time when the nations every-where confessed many gods, he mounted up to the thought of the One God, who alone is entitled to man's reverence. At a time when the Divine was merged in nature, it was given him to see that God is a Spirit, distinct from the world, a living person, with a heart full of love to His children. At a time when the Divine was worshipped only through symbols by which it was represented, his adoration was paid immediately to God, and needed not the help of the visible creation. Abraham's religion, resting on faith in the one spiritual, personal God, consisted in a living communion with Him, and a holy walk in His presence. It was not so much a new creed that he proclaimed among men, as it was a new life and experience to which he bore witness.

If now we inquire into the origin of his religion, if we ask how it came to pass that he, through the denial of all other gods, arrived at the recognition of the one true God, there is only one possible answer. It is the answer given by the Bible, an answer perfectly consistent with reason, the sole answer in harmony with the facts of history; and that answer is that it was by a special Divine revelation granted to Abraham, and through him to the world.

But when we have said this, have we not said all? What room can there be for further investigation? Abraham's faith was the gift of God; does not that end the whole matter? By no means. The gifts of God are not arbitrarily bestowed. Especially is the revelation He has made of himself not magical, but historical. It is indeed supernatural and divine; but it has at the same time its natural and human conditions, which God himself has historically prepared by his providence. It has its fitting time and its fitting place; and not until that time has arrived and that place has been reached, is the revelation granted. Neither rationalism, which sets aside the Divine factor, nor abstract supernaturalism, which ignores the human factor, can adequately explain revelation in any of its stages. Supernatural and divine in its nature and origin, revelation becomes natural and human by coming into union with the history of man; and it is only when we view it as a manifestation of God from above the plane of nature and reason, a manifestation, however, in which the Divine enters into history and subjects itself to its laws, that we occupy a position from which to survey all its facts.

What, then, we ask, were the historic conditions which rendered possible the communication of revealed religion under its special Old Testament form? The question is not how the spiritual faith of Abraham evolved itself naturally and necessarily out of the natural and religious forces of his own age. This it never did. It is not the

product of nature, but the gift of revelation. It is a new, divine life, transplanted from heaven to earth; transplanted, however, to a soil peculiarly adapted to receive it into its bosom and develop all its latent powers. And what we wish to know is the character of that soil, and the points of contact it afforded for the higher revealed truth.

It is a fine remark of Martineau, in his essay on the "Distinctive Types of Christianity," that "there is a natural correspondence between the genius of a people and the form of their belief. Each mood of mind brings its own wants and aspirations, colors its own ideal, and interprets best that part of life and the universe with which it is in sympathy. John Knox would have been misplaced in Athens, and Tauler could not have lived on the moralism of Kant. No doubt the ultimate seat of human faith lies deep down below the special propensities of individuals or tribes—in a consciousness and faculty common to the race. But ere it comes to the surface and disengages itself in a concrete shape, its type and color will be affected by the strata of thought and feeling through which it emerges into the light."

Now, the religion of the Old Testament was the religion of the Hebrew family of the Semitic race. It was the Divine purpose to form a people of God, a holy nation, in which the knowledge and worship of the one true God should find an abiding home among the nations of the earth. To this end He called Abraham and gave him the promise of an innumerable seed. Was this Divine election arbitrary? It was the result, indeed, of a free act of grace. There was no merit either in the patriarch or in the Israel that sprang from his loins, to entitle them to this distinguished honor. Yet it does not follow that God might have chosen Zoroaster, or Confucius, or Sakya-muni, or Solon to be the bearer of His revelation. Each race has its special talent to be cultivated for the glory of God. The work of the Aryan lies in the sphere of worldly culture, the Greek, for example, developing the idea of science and art, the Roman, the idea of politics and law. But the vocation of the Semitic race is religion. Especially may it be said of the Hebrew nation, which gathers up into itself all the characteristics, good and bad, of the Semitic genius, that it is pre-eminently the people of religion.

And the reason of this is to be sought for in the character of the Semitic mind. God, who has given to races as to individuals their peculiar endowments, has given to this race a nature predisposed to religion rather than to a lower worldly interest—and to a religion of a peculiar type. It was this that moved him, when he purposed to reveal himself for the salvation of man, to select a Semitic people, and not a people of another race, as the theater of his supernatural mani-

festations, from the lowest to the highest, in the incarnation and glorification of his Son.

What, then, is the character of the Semitic mind? It must be remembered that, in answering this question, we have to do with this race as a whole, and not with isolated exceptions in tribes or individuals—with the native endowments of the race, and not with its acquired qualities. The original life may, of course, be modified here and there to a large extent by religion, by culture, by intercourse with differing races, and in various other ways. But there is a Semitic type of character, and it is this, in contrast especially with the Aryan or Indo-Germanic type, that we desire to present.

The difference between them may be summed up in a word: While the Aryan mind is prevaillingly objective, the Semitic is prevaillingly subjective. All the minor features distinguishing the two races grow out of this broad, general feature. The proper field of the Aryan is the external world. He masters it by his science, he idealizes it by his art; he brings it into his service, and makes it do his bidding; he binds its parts together by commerce and well-ordered governments; in brief, he carries forward the civilization of the world in accordance with the blessing of Noah, that "God shall enlarge Japheth."

The Semite, on the other hand, lives and moves in another sphere. His cast of mind is not scientific. He may be observant enough, but he rests in phenomena, and fails to reach their underlying causes. That which is most essential in scientific processes—the power of systematizing and generalizing—he utterly lacks. His sense of proportion and harmony is defective; and, accordingly, the arts, with the sole exception of poetry, have not flourished on Semitic soil. He has no talent for establishing well-balanced social and political organizations. In his yearning for dreamy ease, he retains unchanged the time-honored customs of his ancestors, and readily submits to the despotic sway of his rulers.

This contrast between the Aryan and the Semitic mind is traceable in part to the nature of their homes. There is always a correspondence between the character of a people and the physical geography of the territory it occupies. In Aryan lands, nature exhibits a wonderful variety in scenery and life. Her ever-changing aspects seem to invite the mind of man to roam abroad. She awakens his senses, calls forth all his powers, and, by her sterner as well as gentler moods, schools him to a full and many-sided life. How different in the confined homestead of the Semitic race! Here all is uniformity. The sandy deserts and the parched lands, the glaring light and the

scorching heat make man retreat within himself. His life flows on evenly and monotonously; and his activity, instead of being directed, as is the Aryan's, to the external world, is turned within. An energetic self-concentration gives him spiritual depth and force.

His inner world, however, is not that of logical thought and abstract speculation. The Semitic mind has never produced a philosophy, in the higher sense of the word. It has borrowed the systems of other nations, but has never created one for itself. Its native philosophy—if such it may be called—embodies in myths, allegories, parables and apothegms the fruits of practical wisdom, not the results of metaphysical speculation. For these we must go to the Aryan mind of India, Greece and Germany. The Semite lives in the realm of imagination and feeling. His imagination is quick and glowing, but, owing to his natural environment, it lacks richness and variety of imagery. It is easily excited, but incapable of keeping itself poised aloft for a long time. His intense soul, touched by every wave of feeling, must pour itself out in poetry—not, however, in its objective forms, the epic and the drama—but, in accordance with his peculiar genius, in the subjective form of the lyric. In this, all the passion of his passionate nature, so intense in love and hate, finds utterance.

Yet, with all his inwardness, he develops no strong sense of individuality. The Aryan, whose mind fastens on the variety of nature and who struggles with her manifold single forces, attains through his resistance a proud feeling of personal power, and becomes self-reliant and independent. But the Semite, whose mind is impressed, by the uniformity of nature, with the feeling of an immeasurable, irresistible weight, surrenders himself in quiet resignation. And this feeling of absolute dependence on and submission to an overwhelming power, what is it but the religious feeling in its yet untutored state—a feeling which gains in intensity by the very poverty of the Semite's life, and which, weakened by no dissipation of the senses, becomes almost the sole element of his existence.

And this leads us to notice the Semitic type of religion. Our materials for sketching this are as yet scanty; enough is known, however, to show that among the religions of the Semitic peoples there is a common family likeness, quite as striking as that which is found among the languages of that race. It is almost as easy to recognize a Semitic religion as it is to recognize a Semitic language. They have all been cast in the same mold. They all have their root in a primitive religion, which reflected all the peculiarities of the general life of the race—its subjectivity, its one-sidedness, its passion,—and was fully

shaped before the several families and tribes sundered themselves from the parent stem.

We need hardly remark that it was a natural religion, and that, pervaded by the principle of all heathenism, it absorbed God in the world. We look in vain here for Theism. Nature, at that early day, intoxicated the mind of man, and gave him gods which, at the best, were only personifications of cosmical powers. We look in vain for spirituality; for how shall the religions of nature be spiritual, when the life of nature is sensuous? And yet Semitic religion, with all its imperfections, its polytheistic belief, and its coarseness of worship, forms an easier transition than Aryan religion to the revealed faith of the Old Testament. It serves a pedagogic purpose, and prepares the way for the introduction of a higher and purer religion. Spiritual monotheism, after the pattern of the Old Testament, could more readily find a lodgment in the ancient Semitic mind, disciplined as it had been for ages by the Semitic religion, than in the mind of ancient India or Greece.

In proof of this, it is only necessary to point out a few of the more prominent features of Semitic religion. And first, there is always a chief national god. Each tribe has its own divinity, who is trusted as its natural protector, and around whom gather the thoughts and affections of the people. Moab has its Chemosh, and Ammon its Milcom. And so every Semitic people devotes itself almost exclusively to one supreme deity, whom it may claim properly as its own, and whose power is confined to the land over which he rules. Other gods there are, and often in great numbers; but they occupy a very subordinate position, and are, in fact, nothing but ministers of the national deity, much as the angels are the ministers of the true God.

How different in Aryan mythology! Here we find a circle of superior gods who share the power among themselves. Here we find a division of empire; Jupiter rules in the heavens and earth, Neptune over the sea, and Pluto in the under-world. There is a god of war and a god of love. Almost every art and science, almost every place and circumstance of life has its patron god. Nothing like such division is visible in any Semitic mythology. There is, indeed, an apparent dualism: the chief god is accompanied by his wife; Astarte stands by the side of Baal. The dualism, however, is not real. Astarte is only the form in which Baal manifests himself. In the Phœnician inscriptions she is designated as the "name of Baal" and the "face of Baal"—designations which remind us how, in the Old Testament, "name" and "face" are employed as symbols of the revelation of God.

The male and female god represent one and the same power viewed under a double aspect ; now, as active, and again, as receptive.

In the prominence Semitic religion gives to the one national or tribal god, it affords a point of contact for the monotheistic faith. Here is a center of unity such as is not found in any Aryan religion. Unquestionably the mind can pass, with much less violence to its habits of thought and feeling, from the acknowledgment of a chief god with limited territorial sway, to the acknowledgment of the sole, universal God, the Lord of heaven and earth, than it can pass, through a total denial of a multiplicity of equal gods, to the recognition and worship of the only God. To the Aryan mind, monotheism would seem to border on Atheism ; to the Semitic mind, it would commend itself as the highest development and proper completion of its idea of the national god.

Another feature of Semitic religion worthy of notice, is its conception and naming of God as might, dominion, majesty. The Aryan, in surveying nature, fastens on its variety, and loves to trace out the endless diversity of its forms. The result is a polytheism of a different order from that found among Semitic peoples. His gods are but the personifications of the single powers and particular qualities of the world. In each manifestation of cosmical life he sees the presence of a special deity—in sun and moon, in sky and dawn, in fire and water, in mountain and grove.

The Semite, on the other hand, seizes upon the unity of the world. Nothing so much impresses his mind as its power and sublimity. Pantheism, in the Greek sense, is utterly unknown to him. "Nature is nothing but that which has been begotten, and is ruled absolutely by the one Great Absolute Power. And only in the more or less abstract conception of this one power are found what differences there do exist in the Semitic creeds in their respective stages."¹ Unlike the Aryan, the Semite has invented but one name for God. Its form may vary, but its signification is always the same. *El, Elohim*, the Strong ; *Bel, Baal, Adonis*, Lord ; *Moloch, Milcom, Malika*, King ; *Elyon*, the Highest ; *Ram, Rimmon*, the Exalted : these, with other designations, all originally adjectives expressive of general qualities of the Deity, point to the unity of the conception of God as might, dominion, majesty. Here, again, we find a point of contact for monotheism. For, while the Aryan sees in the phenomena of the world the operation of manifold powers which he regards as divine, and designates by a large variety of names, the Semite feels the presence of one undivided power, and calls it *El*, the Mighty One.

¹ Deutsch's *Literary Remains*, p. 180.

Moreover, the Semitic mind is, by its original constitution, inclined to the inward and spiritual, rather than to the external and natural. Its tendency is intensive, not extensive. It has produced no great painters or sculptors, and its poetry is lyric, not epic or dramatic. For the creation of these forms of art, it lacks the necessary interest in the varied objects of the outer world. This same spiritual bias makes itself apparent in religion, at least in its primitive and purer form. In later times, indeed, the Semites became as grossly idolatrous as other races. But all of them, at certain stages, abhorred the making of visible images of things they loved, revered and worshiped; and their cultus, in its earlier period, would seem to have been connected not with vain idols, but with expressive symbols. Sacred trees and stones sufficed to represent to their thoughts an invisible and divine presence. Evidently a simple, symbolical worship of such a character would serve, better than any Aryan worship, with the countless images of its gods, to prepare the mind to receive the spiritual religion of revelation.

THE REVISED VERSION OF THE OLD TESTAMENT.

BY PROFESSOR H. P. SMITH, D. D.,

Cincinnati, Ohio.

Two things are at once evident to one who takes up the New Version—one is that it is a decided improvement, the other, that the changes introduced are much fewer than they might have been. The Revision is a conservative one. It is, therefore, likely to be accepted by people in general with less opposition than was manifest in the case of the New Testament.

The conservatism is most manifest in regard to the text. The Revisers have departed (at least ostensibly) from the Massoretic text in only about fifteen cases. They have, however, given in the margin readings from the Versions in about two hundred more. The majority of these readings should be in the text, and a large number of others (at least as many more) ought also to have been noticed. I shall have occasion to examine this question more fully elsewhere, so will not say more about it now. The position of the American Company in this respect is unfortunate, and no adequate explanation has yet been offered for it.

One suggestion of the Americans is, on the other hand, worthy of hearty endorsement, viz., "to substitute the Divine name 'Jehovah'